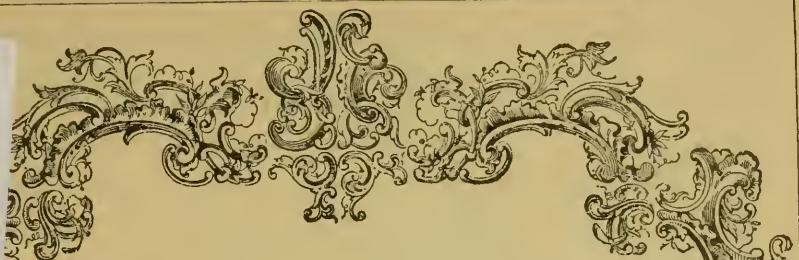


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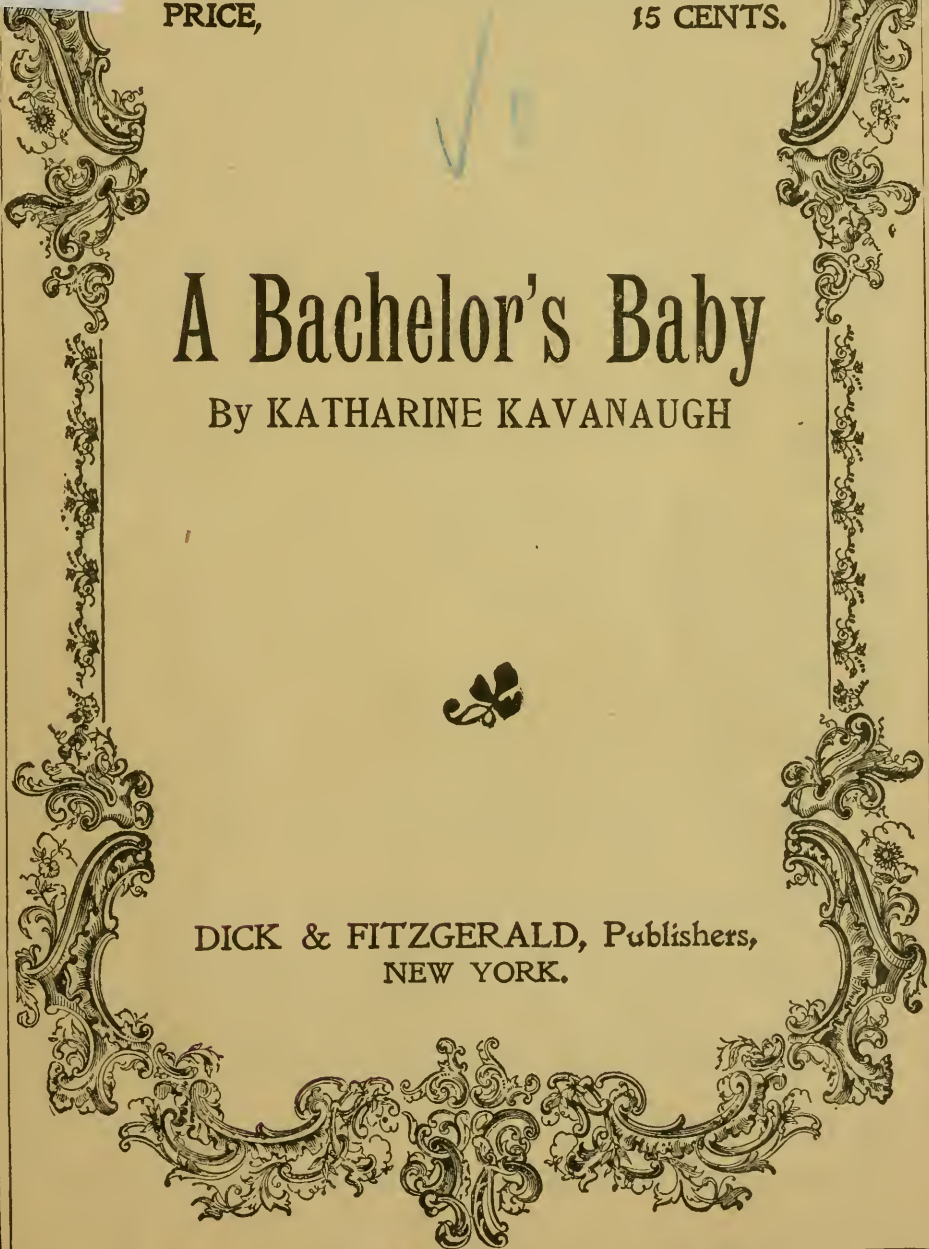
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# A Bachelor's Baby

By KATHARINE KAVANAUGH



DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers,  
NEW YORK.



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DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann Street, N. Y.

# A BACHELOR'S BABY

A Farce in One Act

BY  
KATHERINE KAVANAUGH

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NEW YORK  
DICK & FITZGERALD  
18 ANN STREET

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1911

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## A BACHELOR'S BABY.

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### CHARACTERS.

DICK SUMMERS.....*A Struggling Artist*  
ELIZABETH CLARKSON.....*His Friend*  
MISS SMITHERS.....*His Landlady*  
A POLICE OFFICER.  
THE BABY'S MOTHER.

MISS SMITHERS and THE BABY'S MOTHER may be doubled. A toy "cry-baby" can be used in the wings for the "DA-DA."

TIME.—The present. LOCALITY.—Anywhere.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—About thirty minutes.

### PROPERTIES.

See scene plot.

### STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience, R. means right hand, L. left hand of stage; C., center; D. door in flat; Up, means up stage toward rear; Down, down stage toward footlights.

## A BACHELOR'S BABY.

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SCENE.—*A studio on the third floor. Pictures, easels, artist's tools, etc., in a state of disorder. Screen up L. Table down L. C. Door L. At rise of curtain MISS SMITHERS raps twice on door of L. Then enters. She is of the sharp old maid type. She looks about the room sharply, then gives an exclamation of disgust.*

MISS SMITHERS. Out, as usual. For seven days I've been trying to catch him, always with the same result. Last night I waited two hours on the stairs, hoping to waylay him and present my bill, but he must have known I was there. How in the world he manages to get in and out without me seeing him is a caution. He's got it down to a science. (*Sees note tacked on the edge of the table, tears it off and reads*) "Have gone to the station to meet my fiancée. Don't disturb my things." Well, the nerve of these artists. If he'd give me my room rent instead of orders, it would be more to the point.

ENTER DICK, door L., *in a wildly excited state, clumsily carrying an infant in his arms. When he sees MISS SMITHERS, he abruptly turns toward the door, but thinks better of it and appeals to her.*

DICK. Oh, Miss Smithers, I'm so glad to see you.

MISS S. I suppose that's why you started to run.

DICK. That was instinct, pure and simple. I've been getting out of your way so much the past few weeks, it's become a habit. (*She looks surprised at his impudence*) Oh, I know,—don't reproach me. If you only knew what I've gone through in the last hour you'd have pity on me.

MISS S. Will you kindly tell me what that is in your arms.



DICK (*dramatically*). Wait,—I'm coming to that—give me time—just a little time—and I'll tell you the whole tragic story.

MISS S. (*suspiciously*). See here, is this a new scheme to put me off? If it is, I warn you, it won't work. In my ten years in the furnished room business, I've been treated to all the fairy tales and bunco schemes in existence. It has got to be a masterpiece that I'll fall for.

DICK. Oh, my dear lady, how you wrong me. You see before you a miserable helpless man, longing for some good woman's sympathy, some kind-hearted noble female who will put forth a helping hand and relieve him of—

MISS S. Of what?

DICK (*thrusting the baby toward her*). Of this kid.

MISS S. (*raising her hand to ward him off*). Stop! Don't advance another step. (*Sternly*) How came you by that child?

DICK. Ah, thereby hangs a tale. As you perhaps learned from the tender note I left on my table, I went to the station to meet the lady, who, some day, by the grace of God and the picture-dealers, will be my wife. Her train came in but she was not on it. As I turned away regretfully, a woman rushed wildly up, and speaking excitedly in a foreign language, thrust this infant in my arms. Before I could say, "Beans," she disappeared in the crowd, and there all alone I stood, madly clutching this bundle of squalling humanity, risking my unsullied reputation as a single man, and my fiancée likely to step off the next train.

MISS S. And you expect me to believe that?

DICK. Oh, you must—you must believe me—see, (*Holds out the baby*) here is the proof.

MISS S. Yes, the proof of your iniquity; the proof that I've been harboring in my house a villain who poses as a single man, when he is the father of a family.

DICK (*pleadingly*). Oh, not a family,—don't say that, this is the only one I have.

MISS S. A—h. You admit it then?

DICK. No, no, I admit nothing—I don't know what I'm saying—you are taking advantage of my excited state to make me say things that are not true.

MISS S. Huh, you could always do that. Well, you'll have to think up another lie, this one doesn't appeal to me.

DICK. Then you refuse?

MISS S. Refuse! You hav'n't offered me anything yet.

DICK. I'm offering you this infant. Take it as your very own. I relinquish all claim to it.

MISS S. Young man, are you aware that I am a respectable single woman? How would I explain the presence of that? (*Points to the infant.*)

DICK. You could say Santa Claus brought it. Say anything, I don't care what you say, only take it off my hands before my girl arrives. She might not believe my story either.

MISS S. She'd be a fool if she did. It is my opinion at the present moment that that child is right where it belongs.

DICK (*excitedly*). You mean—you mean that I—that I am——

MISS S. Its father.

DICK. No, don't say that. Believe me, you wrong me most cruelly. I give you my word of honor that I am not this child's father.

BABY. Da—da.

DICK (*shakes it*). You're a liar.

MISS S. (*who has half turned her back, quickly turns again*). SIR!!

DICK. I was talking to the kid.

MISS S. It's a wise child that knows its own father.

DICK. If you say "father" again, I'll go mad and strangle this thing. Oh, that this should have happened on the very day Elizabeth is coming. Miss Smithers, you have a kind heart, can't you see the predicament I'm in,—won't you help me?

MISS S. No. I'm glad that your sins have found you out. It is just as well that that girl should see you as you are.

DICK. Well, if you have no pity for me, won't you do something for this bit of suffering humanity?

MISS S. What do you expect me to do?

DICK. Make it shut up, maybe the thing is hungry. (*The child had been whimpering at intervals since "Da—da."*)

MISS S. I'll go down and get a bottle of milk for it, but what that child wants is its mother.

EXIT L.

DICK (*to the baby, who is crying softly*). Why didn't I throw you down some coal hole, or quietly drop you into an ash barrel before you became so attached to me. (*The baby cries loudly. DICK shouts*) Shut up. (*Pleading*) Oh, please shut up, won't you? (*ELIZABETH raps on the door in flat. DICK, very much startled, thrusts the baby behind him; he is frightened, speaks in whispers*) A knock! What—

what if it should be Elizabeth. Fathers! what shall I do with this? (*Brings the child forward, looks about quickly, spies screen up L.*) Ah, an inspiration. I'll smother it to death behind the screen. (*Quickly puts child on couch, throws sofa pillows and couch cover over it, draws screen. Pulls himself together, and opens the door as ELIZABETH knocks again.*)

ELIZABETH (*entering*). Why, Dick, I was afraid you were not at home, I knocked twice.

DICK (*foolishly*). Oh, that's nothing, I've been knocked oftener than that. You see I had my hands full at the time and couldn't open the door. I went to the station to meet you.

ELIZABETH. I'm sorry. I missed the Pennsylvania train so I came on the B. & O.

DICK. Ah, yes, that accounts for your being late.

ELIZABETH. It's too bad you went to the station for nothing.

DICK. Yes, but I came away with more than I was looking for.

ELIZABETH (*looking around*). How nice and quiet it is here.

DICK. Yes, it is just now, but,—(*Looking toward the screen*) you never can tell.

ELIZABETH. What do you mean?

DICK (*glancing over his shoulder*). It's liable to break out at any minute.

ELIZABETH (*looks at him closely*). Why, Dick, how queerly you talk. Have you anything on your mind? (*Pouting*) You are certainly not giving me much of your attention.

DICK (*takes her hands and kisses her*). Forgive me, little woman, I've been awfully upset this morning, but I think the trouble has passed away now; we won't discuss it, let it sleep. (*Is about to put his arms around her.*)

BABY. Da—da. (*They are both startled.*)

ELIZABETH (*looking about*). What was that?

DICK. Don't mind that, it's only the cat.

ELIZABETH. Why, I never heard a cat meow like that before.

DICK (*talking to kill time*). Well, this is a new kind of cat—it belongs to a fellow in the next room—wanders in here occasionally. It says all sorts of things—in fact, it talks seven different languages—sometimes all at once—and



then again, when it isn't feeling quite up to the mark, only two at a time. (*He rattles on until she stops him.*)

ELIZABETH (*looks at him searchingly*). Dick, how foolishly you talk; you can't be feeling well.

ENTER MISS SMITHERS, L., *with bottle of milk, she sets it on the table, casts a look toward DICK and ELIZABETH who are down R., and then turns toward door L.*

ELIZABETH. Who is she?

DICK (*to ELIZABETH*). Miss Smithers.

MISS S. (*turns*). You addressed me?

DICK. I want to make you acquainted with Miss Clarkson.

MISS S. Miss or Mrs.?

DICK. I said 'Miss'.

MISS S., I *heard* what you said. Please to remember, Mr. Summers, that I am a respectable single lady, and act accordingly.

ELIZABETH (*over DICK's shoulder*). Well, of all the—What does she mean?

DICK. Sh—h——don't mind her. (*Taps his forehead, winks at ELIZABETH*) She was crossed in love 97 years ago and never got over it.

MISS S. (*has gone as far as the door, turns again*). Let me remind you once again, sir, that this is a law-abiding, respectable boarding-house, and that I am personally responsible for the goings on under this roof. I also linger to remark that that milk should be taken while it is warm, and also that an early remittance will be duly appreciated.

[EXIT L.]

ELIZABETH. What a peculiar woman. Respectability seems to be her long suit.

DICK. Yes, she's very seriously afflicted that way. Some day it will strike her heart and kill her.

ELIZABETH. For whom did she bring that milk?

DICK (*hesitates*). Er,—for me.

ELIZABETH. For you,—in a bottle like that! Ridiculous. (*Laughs.*)

DICK. Yes, I know it is,—but, poor thing, I have to humor her. Sometimes she waits to see that I take it.

ELIZABETH. How absurd.

ENTER MISS SMITHERS L. *Speaks pointedly to ELIZABETH.*

MISS S. I feel it my duty to insist that that milk should

be given to that poor starving thing at once. It is my opinion it hasn't had any nourishment since yesterday. Who knows, it may die on our hands. A word to the wise is sufficient. [EXIT L. on giving ELIZABETH a knowing look.]

ELIZABETH. Whatever does she mean? Dick, are you really ill? (*Places her hand on his forehead*) You do look rather pale, and you're feverish too. You've been acting queerly ever since I came. There's something the matter with you, and you won't tell me. She called you a "poor starving thing." Perhaps you're broke and have been going without your regular meals. I know you struggling artists do that sometimes. (*DICK has been speechless at the turn affairs have taken. At this point he sinks weakly into a chair.*)

ELIZABETH. See, you are so weak you can't stand. You must drink this milk and then we'll go out to dinner. (*Takes bottle.*)

DICK (*rallies sufficiently to protest against the bottle*). No, no,—take it away,—I'll die first.

ELIZABETH. You must drink it, it will make you stronger, the lady said it had to be taken while it was still warm. See, let me hold it for you. (*Offers him the tube while she holds the bottle.*)

DICK (*weakly*). Must I?

ELIZABETH. Yes, you shall not starve to death while I can prevent it.

DICK (*bravely attempts to swallow some of the milk, but pushes it away disgusted*). No—No,—it's too much, I'll starve first.

ELIZABETH (*puts bottle on the table*). You shan't do anything of the kind, get your hat and we'll go to that little Greek restaurant around the corner.

DICK (*jumping up happily*). Oh, you blessed girl,—what a happy thought. We'll leave this house of too much trouble and seek a more congenial place. (*Takes his hat, offers her his arm, and they start up stage. As they reach the door, the BABY cries, "Da—da," DICK suddenly turns, resumes his excited manner*) My God, no—I forgot—it is impossible—I can't leave it—I can't bear to leave it. (*Comes down and sinks in a chair at table, his head on his arm.*)

ELIZABETH (*surprised*). Well, if you feel that way about it, here take it with you. (*Picks up bottle of milk and hands it to him.*)

DICK (*holding out the bottle*). What, this? (*Laughs ex-*

*citedly*) My dear girl,—you think it was this paltry thing I couldn't leave? Where is my manhood, my courage, that a bottle of milk could chain me to the spot. Ah, no, it's the other—the other.

ELIZABETH. The other what?

DICK. What goes with it, the other component part of that. (*Puts bottle on table.*)

ELIZABETH. Well, I don't know what you're talking about, but if you've got anything you don't want, for pity's sake get rid of it, before you have me as crazy as you are yourself.

DICK. Get rid of it, but how? Aye, there's the rub, how?

ELIZABETH. Throw it out of the window.

DICK (*shocked, rising from the chair and speaking accusingly*). Cruel woman, monster in female form, to suggest such a thing.

ELIZABETH. What's the matter, will it break?

DICK (*sadly*). No, it will not break.

ELIZABETH. Then I don't see the harm. See here, Dick, if you don't take me out to dinner very soon, I'll have to devour that milk myself. I'm so hungry it's going to my head.

DICK. Hungry. I believe that's what is the matter with me, I'm hungry. (*Stops suddenly, looks toward the screen*) Oh, the poor little son-of-a-gun.

ELIZABETH. Who's a son-of-a-gun?

DICK. I am, for keeping you from dinner. I know what I'll do with the milk, I'll put it behind the screen so the cat can get it, and we'll go and have a nice and juicy steak with mushrooms. (*Puts milk behind the screen for baby.*)

ELIZABETH. No reneging this time.

DICK. We won't hesitate until we reach the table. (*Gives her his arm, they go up stage*) To the little restaurant around the corner. (*As they reach the door it is thrown open and an officer enters.*)

OFFICER. Ah-ha! Just in the nick of time. The birds were just about to fly the coop, eh?

ELIZABETH. What does he mean, Dick? Who's he calling a bird?

DICK (*running his hand through his hair*). Is this another creation of my poor fevered brain, or is it a real cop?

ELIZABETH (*pinches the officer's arm*). It's real, Dick. You can see its a cop by the brass buttons.

OFFICER. Huh! Inclined to be a bit frivolous, eh? Well, that won't last long. (*To DICK*) You're wanted for a very serious offense, young man.

ELIZABETH. Who wants him? He can't go, he belongs to me.

OFFICER. He does, eh? Maybe you're an accomplice. There always is a woman in a game of this kind.

DICK. So, it's a game, is it? Well, run away, officer, we don't want to play. We're hungry.

OFFICER. Here, no more of that funny stuff. Where have you hidden it? If it's here, you had better hand it over without any more trouble.

ELIZABETH. Dick, have you anything that belongs to this gentleman?

DICK. My dear, don't expect me to answer a sensible question. My brain has gone into statu quo. From now on I must be led gently, but firmly LED.

OFFICER. Here, it's no use talkin' to a couple of lunatics. I'm going to take you before the captain. Whether you go to the pen or to the insane asylum makes no difference to me, see?

DICK. That's real sweet of him, you see, he doesn't care what becomes of us.

ELIZABETH. But, Dick, at times he looks as if he knew what he was talking about. Officer, if it is not asking too much, why do you want to take us before the captain? What is the charge?

OFFICER. KIDNAPPING!

DICK. Help!

ELIZABETH. Oh, Dick.

OFFICER. It's my opinion you're a couple of dangerous crooks. You'll each get twenty years for this. Where's the kid?

ELIZABETH (*frightened*). Oh, officer, you've made an awful mistake. There is no child here.

OFFICER (*spies the bottle of milk*). No? Then who's that milk for? (*DICK has collapsed in chair.*)

ELIZABETH. It's for him; the doctor ordered him to take it that way. Believe me, there is no child here.

BABY (*cries*). Da—da, da—da, da—da. (*All three are startled.*)

OFFICER. Ah-ha,—the innocent betrays the guilty! Where's the child? Ah, behind that screen. (*Rushes back*



*and brings forth the infant*) Caught with the goods. This will mean thirty years a piece in the pen.

DICK. Every time he speaks he adds ten years.

ELIZABETH (*cries*). Oh, Dick Summers, how could you, how could you, you've broken my h-heart.

OFFICER. Stow the weeps, lady; that gag's been tried before. It's you two to the stationhouse, and the less trouble you make the better.

ELIZABETH. Dick, can't you speak, will you allow this outrage?

DICK (*jumping up*). No, by George, a dozen brass buttons and a stick can't walk into my dwelling place and heap insults upon me without even knocking at the door. Hang the law. I have my rights as a citizen of the United States, and these rights must be respected. Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury, the facts of the case are simply these. As I stood waiting at the church—at the railroad station, a woman, a foreigner, placed that child in my arms and then shamelessly ran away. I looked for her in the crowd, but couldn't find her. I even looked for an officer, but, naturally, couldn't find one. What was I to do under the circumstances? I brought the child home to my landlady.

OFFICER. Why didn't you take it to the station house?

DICK. I didn't have sense enough.

OFFICER. Well, you'll have to come to the station and explain that to the captain. The mother of the child is there now crying her eyes out for her baby. She says she asked you to hold it while she got her ticket, and you ran away with it.

DICK. Sh's a——

ELIZABETH. DICK!

DICK. ——lady.

ELIZABETH. Do you really mean we have got to go with you?

OFFICER. Sure; if the captain lets you off, that's his business, I got orders to bring you in.

ELIZABETH. Then lead on, we will follow.

OFFICER (*handing baby to DICK*). Here, you carry the kid.

ENTER WOMAN *hurriedly with outstretched arms*.

WOMAN. Ach, Gott in Himmel! Mein kind—da ist es—

## A Bachelor's Baby.

OFFICER. There's the woman now. What is she talking about?

ELIZABETH. Dick, do you understand German?

DICK. Not a germ.

ELIZABETH. Meine liebe Frau, was wollen Sie? (*Goes to her and confers a moment in an undertone. To DICK*) She says she asked you to hold the baby, while she went for her ticket. Why didn't you wait?

DICK. Is that what she said? All I could hear was a string of fog-horn gibberish. (*Goes to woman*) There take your baby. (*Goes to ELIZABETH, puts his head on her shoulder*) Now—take yours. (*Cries like a baby. She pats him gently on the back.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

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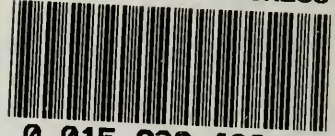
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| WHAT'S NEXT? 3 Acts; 2½ hours.....                     | 7  | 4  |
| WHITE LIE. 4 Acts; 2½ hours.....                       | 4  | 3  |

## WESTERN PLAYS

25 CENTS EACH

|  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
| ROCKY FORD. 4 Acts; 2 hours.....                     | 8  | 3 |
| GOLDEN GULCH. 3 Acts; 2¼ hours.....                  | 11 | 3 |
| RED ROSETTE. 3 Acts; 2 hours.....                    | 6  | 3 |
| MISS MOSHER OF COLORADO. 4 Acts; 2½ hours....        | 5  | 3 |
| STUBBORN MOTOR CAR. 3 Acts; 2 hours; 1 Stage Setting | 7  | 4 |
| CRAWFORD'S CLAIM. (15 cents.) 3 Acts; 2¼ hours.      | 9  | 3 |

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